

Attorney Docket No. DDR 5455 (1417B P 316)

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Prior U.S. Patent Application of
Arnold C. Bilstad, et al.For: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR
MANIPULATING PRE-STERILIZED
COMPONENTS IN AN ACTIVE
STERILE FIELD

Prior Application No.: 09/294,964

Prior Application Filed: April 20, 1999

Examiner: I. Soubra

Group Art Unit: 1744

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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT TO CPA

BOX CPA

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

This Preliminary Amendment is being filed with the attached CPA Request in accordance with MPEP § 714 and 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(d)(4). Accordingly, the below amendments relate to the prior application as it existed prior to the filing of this CPA Request and no new matter is being added. A Petition for Three Months Extension of Time pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.136 with a check in the amount of \$920.00 is also enclosed, making the date of the attached CPA Request due on or before October 10, 2001. Therefore, the CPA Request and this Preliminary Amendment are timely filed.

Note, this "Preliminary Amendment" is being submitted in the form required under the amended rule 37 C.F.R. 1.121. Accordingly, a sheet containing the marked-up claims corresponding to the substituted claims set forth below, is attached hereto.

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AMENDMENTS

In the Claims:

Please amend Claims 1, 14 and 15 as follows (See also, *Attachment*):

Claim 1 (Amended) A method for the sterile joining of two or more pre-sterilized components comprising the steps of:

- a. sterilizing an end of each component to be joined together within an active sterile field;
- b. preparing the end of each component to be joined while exposed to the active sterile field; and
- c. moving the end of at least one of the components while exposed to the active sterile field to thereby join the prepared ends together while exposed to the active sterile field.

Claim 14 (Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the step of moving to thereby join comprises the steps of:

- a. inserting an opened end of one component into the opened end of another component to create overlapping sections; and
- b. bonding the overlapping sections together.

Claim 15 (Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the step of moving to thereby join comprises the steps of:

- a. abutting the opened end of one component with the opened end of another component; and
- b. welding the abutting ends together.